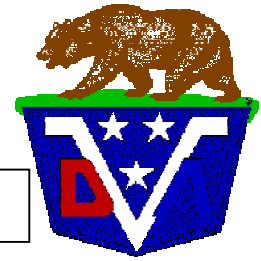


California Department of Veterans Affairs

Gray Davis, Governor
K. Maurice Johannessen, Secretary



CAL-VET LOANS – VETERANS HOMES – VETERANS SERVICES – WOMEN VETERANS
VETERANS CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS – VETS LICENSE PLATES

NEWS RELEASE

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CALIFORNIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD PROVIDES AIR TRANSPORT FOR BARSTOW VETERAN HOME RESIDENT RELOCATION

SACRAMENTO, CA. – May 15, 2003 – The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), in its ongoing efforts to relocate skilled nursing residents from the Barstow Veterans Home with the least amount of disruption, today received assistance from the California Air National Guard.

California National Guard Adjutant General, Major General Paul D. Monroe, Jr., after receiving approval from the United States Air Force, offered the use of a military aircraft and medical staff to transport veterans from the Barstow Veteran's Home to the State Veterans Home at Yountville. "This offer of assistance by General Monroe, especially during this time of world events, is gratefully appreciated," commented Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary K. Maurice Johannessen. "For the California Air National Guard to be able to find the time, manpower, and machinery, to provide this service to our veterans during this transition is an outstanding statement of concern and commitment to America's veterans," he added.

The 146th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, based at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme, north of Los Angeles, provided a C-130 aircraft along with a five-member medical airlift team to transport eleven residents from the Barstow home. Six members of the Home's medical transfer team, including the Chief Medical Officer of Barstow, Doctor Gold, also traveled with the residents. The flight originated at nearby Barstow-Daggett Airport with the drop off at Napa County Airport.

The trip from Barstow to Yountville by land would normally take upwards of twelve hours. However, with the assistance of the California Air National Guard, travel time was shortened to less than three hours. The resident's journey began with a twenty-mile drive to the Barstow/Daggett Airport, a ninety-minute flight to Napa, with a concluding drive of less than fifteen miles from the Napa County Airport to Yountville.

Major General Dan Gibson, Commander of the California Air National Guard, which is a reserve component of the United States Air Force, commented about the mission. "Today's medical air transport of our respected veterans is a continuation of our mission to assist those in need. The health conditions of these veterans warranted our assistance, just as we have come to the aid of those in need following floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters."

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Note to editors: This news release and previous CDVA news releases are available on our website at www.cdva.ca.gov and via e-mail from andrew.kotch@cdva.ca.gov or jaimeteaga@cdva.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The CDVA started the process of relocating Barstow Veteran Home residents of the skilled nursing facility (SNF) to the two other state veteran homes in Chula Vista and Yountville at the end of March. Today's effort brings the total number of Barstow Veterans Home residents relocated to 40. Twenty-three have moved to the Chula Vista Home while Yountville has now received seventeen. All previous transferred had been by way of vehicle. The Department announced on March 27 the closure of the Barstow SNF unit. The Barstow Veterans Home will remain open, continuing to serve California's veterans as a domiciliary facility.

Today's mission by the 146th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron is considered a training mission, meeting regulations set by the Department of Defense, the Army, and Air Force. This airlift was carried out at no cost to the State or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Background on the 146th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron:

- Based at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme, California
- Authorized 135 persons from twelve separate Air Force Specialty Codes ranging from medical (flight nurses, med techs, etc.) to administration and radio communication
- During fiscal year 2002 participated in multiple "real world" deployments on five continents (North & South America, Africa, Europe, Asia)
- Operations included AeroSafe (Team LAX-Airport Security), Operation Noble Eagle (homeland defense), Operation Resolve, FIDAE 2000 Air Show (Chile, where they have been on a nation-building mission helping to establish, train, and certify an air evac squadron within the Fuerza Aerea de Chile since 1995), Operation Joint Guard (Germany & Macedonia), and Operation Enduring Freedom.
- The 146th AES personnel deployed a total of 20,792 man days during FY 2002
- Squadron involved in over 200 aeromedical evacuation missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.
- Moved over 400 patients including many combat casualties from Southwest Asia
- Flew 75 training missions in FY 2002
- Awarded the Mars Trophy for best air evac squadron in the Air National Guard, and the Schaffer Trophy for the best air evac squadron in the Air Force Reserve Component. No other air evac unit has ever won both awards in the same year.

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